

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated December 17, 2004. Claims 1, 2, 4 to 8, 10 to 12 and 15 to 30 are in the application, of which Claims 1, 7, 15 and 23 are independent. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for his indication of allowable subject matter in Claims 3, 4, 9 and 10. In keeping with this indication, the substance of Claims 3 and 9 has been incorporated into independent Claims 1 and 7, respectively, and Claims 3 and 9 have been canceled. Other changes have been made to remaining ones of Claims 1 to 12, so as to improve internal consistency. It is therefore believed that Claims 1, 2, 4 to 8 and 10 to 12 are fully in condition for allowance.

Rejections had been entered under § 102(e), § 102(a), or § 103(a), over U.S. Patent No. 6,643,044 (Iizuka) or over Iizuka in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication 2003/0025784 (Sato). The foregoing amendments have been made without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter, and without conceding the correctness of the rejections, but rather strictly to obtain an earlier allowance.

Claims 15 to 30 have been added and are believed to be directed to allowable subject matter. In more detail, page 4 of the Office Action correctly observed that the Iizuka scanning optical element 15 is not a refractive element. Thus, all of Claims 15 to 30 specify that scanning optical elements constituting a scanning optical system are all refractive scanning optical elements. Claims 15 to 30 therefore define subject matter different from Iizuka at least for the reason that Iizuka uses a reflective mirror 15 as part of its scanning optical system.

It should further be noted that independent Claims 15 and 30 merely specify that a scanning optical element is "decentered", but do not specify how such a decentering is accomplished. Thus, independent Claims 15 and 23 cover decentering by any means, including decentering by parallel offset of an optical axis or by rotational decentering as mentioned beginning at line 25 on page 17. In view of this broadening, a corresponding change has been made to the definition of ΔL so that it now refers to a surface vertex of the scanning optical element. Claims 18 and 26 are specific to decentering in parallel, while Claims 19 and 27 are specific to rotational decentering. Allowance of these claims is respectfully requested.

No other matters being raised in the Office Action, it is believed the entire application is fully in condition for allowance, and such action is courteously solicited.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, CA office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael K. O'Neill", is written over a horizontal line.

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